



St. Louis Audubon Society



VOLUME 62, NUMBER 3

JUNE 1995

National Audubon Society Strategic Planning in Final Stages

by Mary Lou Miller

During the week of May 9, the Strategic Planning Task Force of National Audubon Society sent its final draft to our chapter for comments. These comments were to be sent no later than May 17, which gave little time for consulting with our board of directors on the final draft.

Two of the most striking features in the draft were the plans to have nature centers/field offices in every 1 to 3 states and the lack of attention to the role the regional NAS offices would play in the structure of NAS.

So that chapters in our region could have direct input on the plan, a conference call was set up for Friday, May 12. Dave Tylka joined many others in our region for more than 3 hours that evening discussing the plan. There were also meetings in Kansas City on Saturday, May 13, for our region, but all the activities with International Migratory Bird Day and the North American Migratory Bird Count kept any of our members from attending. We did, however, submit our comments and questions to the Task Force by writing and faxing them to the regional office and the committee.

While the nature center/field office idea sounds great at first, it wasn't clear who would finance such a plan or how it would be supported. There aren't too many chapters that could build and then support a nature center, especially with the staff needed according to the plan. If NAS were to build and support these centers/offices, it would require a tremendous amount of money to do it right. Without previous consultation, Dave, Jim Holsen, and I each commented on this plan, and when we looked at our comments later, we all had the same questions and came to the same conclusions.

On the question of what the regional offices' role would be, we again all noticed the lack of information in the plan. It still isn't clear to us where the regional offices will fit in.

Many concepts in the plan are good. Much thought and work have gone into the final draft. I do believe the chapters and state councils have been given several chances to contribute input into the final plan. We have tried to respond each time comments were requested.

We will try to keep you updated on the latest from NAS and the Strategic Planning process. If you would like to see a complete copy of the final draft, please call me, and I will be happy to make a copy and mail it to you. If you have any comments or questions regarding the process so far or the direction in which NAS is headed, you can send those comments to:

Cindy Adams Dunn,
Co-Chair Steering Committee
Donal C. O'Brien, Jr.,
Co-Chair Steering Committee
National Audubon Society
700 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

or send a fax to:

Strategic Planning Project Team
Fax No.: 1-800-636-4443
or use Compuserve: 71634,235

Be sure to send a copy to:

Ron Klataske
National Audubon Society
West Central Regional Office
210 Southwind Place
Manhattan, KS 66502
Fax No.: (913) 537-4389

St. Louis Audubon All-Member Picnic Froen Center, Shaw Arboretum Sunday, August 13, 1995 3 - 9 pm

Meat (bratwurst, hot dogs, hamburgers & chicken), soda and iced tea will be furnished.

Bring a dish to share with everyone, other drinks if you prefer, and your own eating utensils, plates, etc.

In the evening, we will take a short walk to the Arboretum wetland area led by Dr. James Trager. Come for an afternoon and evening of fellowship and relaxation. Get to know other Auduboners from our chapter.

Please call Mary Lou Miller (H# 389-3969, evenings and weekends) by August 6 to make reservations for the number of people from your family who plan to attend.



From Your President

by Mary Lou Miller

The following Audubon members deserve a special thanks for the work they have done on recent activities:

NAS Strategic Planning

Jim Holsen
Bill Salsgiver
Dave Tylka

Conservation Meetings

Jim Holsen & Conservation Committee

Spring Birding

Larry Asma
Paul Bauer
Mike Flieg
Jim Holsen
Dave Pierce
Kevin Renick
Larry Schreiwer
Mike Treffert

International Migratory Bird Week Bird Workshop

Louise Bradshaw
Ron Darling
Tom Day
Mary Dueren
Jerry Miller
Lawrence Schreiwer

International Migratory Bird Week Booth at Botanical Garden

Fred Boeneker
Anita Brandmeier
LaVerne Koyne
Sue Leonard
Betty Williams

A small cart for loading and unloading and portfolios to store and move our posters and art work have recently been acquired for our office and for use in transporting our booth equipment. Thank you to **Jerry Miller** and **Betsy Warren** for the purchase of these items.

* * * * *

St. Louis Audubon is canceling its subscriptions to *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Wild Birds*, and *Zoo Books*. If you take any of these publications or other wildlife books and do not keep your copies and would be willing to let us have them, please call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969, evenings and weekends. These publications would be kept in our office library.

Volunteers Needed!!

Members are needed to help with the following for the 1995-96 fiscal year (May 1, 1995 through April 30, 1996):

Conservation Committee

People to attend hearings, meetings, workshops on specific subjects

People to write letters from our chapter on various subjects

People to keep up to date on specific subjects of their interest

Condolences, illness, good news chair

Holiday open house chair

Annual dinner meeting chair

Community Club Awards chair

Members for the booth committee
under Mary Smith

(We need lots of people who are willing to work in our booth during the year--we will train.)

Bird seed sale co-chairs with Sue Smith and Dianne Johnson

Message center phone line
volunteers, using call notes from
Southwestern Bell
(Volunteers need touch tone phone.)

1996 Birdathon chair

If you can help or be the chair for any of the above, please call Mary Lou Miller (H# 389-3969, evenings and weekends) or leave a message on the answering machine. Thanks!

Get to Know . . .

Betsy Warren

(This is the fifth of a series of articles written about and by St. Louis Audubon board members themselves so that all our membership can be better acquainted with our decision makers on the board.)

I "fledged" only a few years ago into the world of birding and the St. Louis Audubon Society. In 1991 my husband Tom and I moved into a new home with a perfect setting for bird watching. After bugging Jerry Miller about identifying this bird and that bird, I purchased a Peterson's *Field Guide to Eastern Birds*, and a new adventure began. I have now spent countless hours observing birds and testing various methods to keep squirrels out of the feeders.

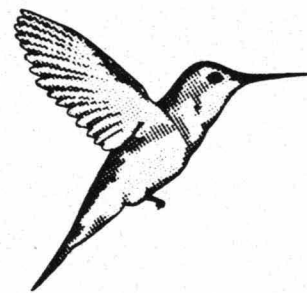
Prior to becoming active in Audubon, I was very involved in the Cub Scout program of the Boy Scouts of America. I served as district and council training chairman, as well as chairing many events such as district Day Camps, Pow Wows, and Tiger Cub Day. In my 20 years as a volunteer, I was awarded a Silver Beaver by the Greater St. Louis Area Council.

Tom and I are the parents of 2 Eagle Scout sons: Greg is operation manager for the Magic House, St. Louis Children's Museum, and Ken is currently completing his master's degree in marine science at Texas A & M University. Both are married, and we are anxiously awaiting grandchildren.

For the past 8 years, I have been an administrative assistant for the Safety Council of Greater St. Louis. I enjoy my current volunteer position of treasurer for Audubon, where I have met so many interesting people. I also enjoy working at events and meeting the public with their various questions about birds and Audubon.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Audubon-Related Activities

St. Louis Audubon July Board Meeting -- *Tuesday, July 11*, at 7:30 pm. Regular meeting postponed a week because 4th of July is 1st Tuesday of the month. July 11 meeting will be devoted to calendar planning for the next year & will be held in the Kirkwood office, 325 North Kirkwood. All who would like to have input into coming events are welcome to attend this meeting.

St. Louis Audubon All-Member Picnic -- *Sunday, August 13*, at Froen Center of Shaw Arboretum, 3 to 9 pm. Reservation deadline is August 6. See announcement on first page.

Special Events

Book Signing by David Brower -- *Thursday, June 15*, at 7 pm. Author Brower will sign copies of *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run* at Library Ltd. Bookstore, 7700 Forsyth in Clayton. Brower is the founder of Friends of the Earth & former executive director of the Sierra Club.

Reinventing Floodplain Policy Conference -- *Friday, June 23*, 8 am to 5 pm, at Ramada Hotel Henry VIII Conference Center, 4690 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Bridgeton. Sponsored by University of Missouri at St. Louis. Focus on floodplain planning for Missouri & Mississippi Rivers which is regional in scope, cooperative in spirit, & open to full range of solutions. Fee is \$60 per person. For registration form & more info., call 516-6912.

Tour of Birding Hot Spots in Central Kansas -- *Friday-Sunday, June 23-25*. Friends of Tyson Research Center is sponsoring a 3-day tour to Kanzaa Prairie near Manhattan, Kansas, & to Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area & Quivera National Wildlife Refuge in Central Kansas. Dick Coles, director of Tyson Research Center, will lead

group. Over 125 species of birds should be seen. Cost, including bus transportation & 2 nights' lodging but **not** meals, is \$189 per person, double occupancy. \$10 membership fee for Friends of Tyson is requested from non-members. For more info., call Darlene Marlow at (314) 727-2325.

3rd Annual Butterfly Count -- *Saturday, June 24*, at 9:30 am at 3 different locations: Busch Wildlife Area, Valley View Glades, & Victoria Glades. Later count date is Sept. 2. For more info., call Bill Brandhorst (H# 965-7269) or Susanne Greenlee (H# 727-6044).

Native Plant Conference & Sale -- *Saturday, September 9*, at Shaw Arboretum of the Missouri Botanical Garden. Conference will focus on rural use of natives rather than urban & will offer wide selection of native plants from local vendors. Registration deadline is August 1; fee is \$30 before July 1, \$40 after July 1. Arboretum is located 40 miles west of St. Louis off I-44 at Gray Summit exit. For registration form & more info., call (314) 451-0850.

Roger Pryor Receives Conservation Award

Roger Pryor, executive director of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, was presented St. Louis Audubon Society's Conservationist of the Year Award at the Society's annual dinner on April 21.

The bronze plaque cites Roger "for the integrity and understanding that he brings to the advocacy of environmental causes in Missouri." Gary Giessow, a past president of St. Louis Audubon, presented the award. Roger's wife, Linda, and 3 children--Andrew, Jessica, and Kathryn--were present to help acknowledge his nationally recognized achievements in conservation and the environment.

Hummertime Looking for Local Participants

Hummertime, a study of the migration of ruby-throated hummingbirds based at Queen's University Biological Station in Elgin, Ontario, is looking for participants from this area.

The Hummertime coordinators are interested mainly in the timing and routes of migration with respect to weather systems and the use of flower resources. They rely on a network of participants from an area extending from Saskatchewan to New Brunswick in Canada and throughout the north-eastern U.S. These people provide dates, of spring arrivals and fall departures of both male and female ruby-throated hummingbirds based mainly on observations made at their own home feeders.

To broaden the survey, participation from this area would be very important to the project. Needed information includes dates when the transient ruby-throats arrive in and leave this area, approximate number of birds, and information on weather conditions and flowers used during their stay here.

In return for these data, Hummertime sends each participant a copy of the hummingbird newsletter, semi-annually. The newsletters summarize the data sent, include highlights and anecdotes from the current season, as well as short essays on a variety of aspects of hummingbird biology. Hummertime also attempts to answer many of the questions sent in by participants.

Anyone interested in becoming part of the Hummertime network should use the following address:

HUMMERTIME
c/o Queen's Univ. Biol. Station
Box 31, R.R. #1
Elgin, Ontario, CANADA
K0G 1E0
ph. (613) 359-6423

The Conservation Corner

1995 Farm Bill Critical to Waterfowl and Grassland Songbird Habitat

by Jim Holsen

"Native birds in North America's grasslands have suffered steeper, more consistent, and more widespread declines over the past 25 years than any other U.S. bird group." (US Fish and Wildlife Service, 1993)

In the last newsletter issue, I discussed the marked declines in the populations of many of the neotropical migrant songbirds that winter in Central and South America and breed in North America. Many of these birds breed in the eastern and midwestern U.S. or Canada or Alaska, in regions which are also home to many working ornithologists. So it was natural that ornithologists would notice first the declines in populations of their own local breeding birds. Only later did it become evident that the populations of many grassland-nesting birds, both resident and migratory species, were also in decline.

Like some forest-interior birds, many grassland birds require large expanses of cover to protect them from predators. When prairie grasslands are fragmented for farming or other purposes, foxes, raccoons, opossums, and other predators find it easy to search the fragmented tracts for nesting birds, while they may feel uncomfortable in the large open expanses of a grassland prairie.

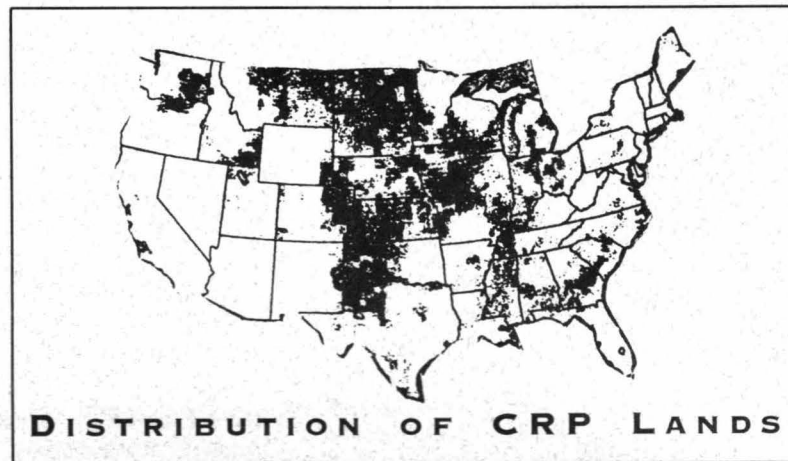
Breeding bird surveys over the past quarter of a century show that populations of such birds as the bobolink, lark bunting, meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, and dickcissel have decreased by 25 to 70 percent. Populations of waterfowl that breed in the prairie pothole regions of the 2 Dakotas and Montana have shown similar declines. For those of us who live in St. Louis, astride the Mississippi flyway and not far from the central flyway that passes through the wetlands of central Kansas, these figures come to life in graphic detail as we follow the count of birds during the migration seasons.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), enacted as part of the Food Security Act (Farm Bill) of 1985, promises to halt and in some cases reverse this dismal trend. Under the CRP farmers are encouraged to place highly erodible land in 10-year conservation contracts. In return, the farmer receives an annual payment of about \$54 per acre, closer to \$63 per acre in Missouri. The farmer is required to plant his CRP lands in protective cover, for which he receives a cost share contribution.

The CRP program was conceived as a means of reducing soil erosion and at the same time reducing farm surpluses and the subsidies that the government pays to farmers when market prices fall below certain target prices. The CRP is highly popular with farmers, and why not? The average value of Missouri farmland enrolled in the CRP is \$715 per acre, so over the 10-year contract the farmer receives a return close to the

value of his land. The cost of the program is about \$1.8 billion per year, but studies show that it is "budget-neutral," i.e., savings on subsidies not paid for crops that would have been grown on CRP lands are estimated at \$2 billion per year, or slightly more than the cost of the program.

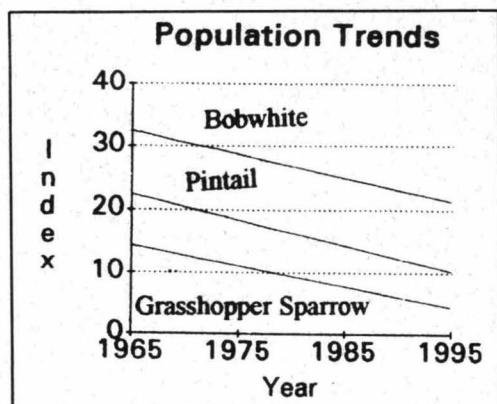
Improvements to wildlife habitat were an afterthought, but they have been dramatic. In 1994 the duck population was estimated to be 50 percent above that of the previous year, due to ample rains and grassland habitat in the prairie pothole regions



of the Dakotas and Montana. In North Dakota, as an example, the population densities of grassland birds on CRP lands are from 10 to 80 percent higher than on ordinary croplands. Upland game birds also benefit from habitat on CRP lands. In northern Missouri, where 15 percent of the land is in the CRP, 70 percent of bobwhite winter roost sites and 60 percent of the breeding sites are on CRP land.

The CRP has created wildlife habitat on a massive scale. The program now includes some 36 million acres, an area roughly 80 percent of the size of Missouri. Most CRP lands are concentrated in the Northern Great Plains, the Southern Great Plains, and the Central Midwest. Missouri is a major participant, with 1.7 million of its 44.6 million acres in the CRP. In Missouri, most of the CRP land is concentrated in the northern farmland counties.

CRP is unique among wildlife habitat conservation programs. Its emphasis is on the prairies where grassland birds are threatened. It sets aside large blocks of habitat where nesting birds are protected from predators. In many states farmers have been encouraged to plant idle



CRP lands in native grasses and wildlife food plots. Not so in Missouri, unfortunately. Missouri farmers have been encouraged to plant CRP lands in Kentucky 31 fescue, a variety developed at the University of Missouri. Land planted in a single crop is not nearly as beneficial to wildlife as land growing a variety of native species.

The fate of the CRP will be decided this summer and early fall as the 1995 Farm Bill is put together in Congress. Many of the CRP contracts entered into after the 1985 Farm Bill was enacted will be expiring in 1996 and 1997, and many of those lands will be put back into cropland unless the program is continued.

Ray Evans, agricultural liaison for the Missouri Department of Conservation, guesses that the program will be retained but that the acreage will be reduced to 25 million acres; others suggest 19 million acres, not much more than half of the present program's size. It is also likely that some desirable flexibility will be introduced into the program--upland acres surrounding an existing wetland area may become eligible and more attention may be given to "filter strips," protective borders along streams of several hundred feet in width which retain soil sediments and agricultural residues from fertilizers and pesticides.

Keep your eye on the 1995 Farm Bill. The National Audubon Society and many other environmental organizations have made this bill one of their highest priorities. Ron Klataske, who heads the West Central Regional Office for Audubon in Manhattan, Kansas, has organized a series of regional workshops on the CRP, the most recent of which was held in Jefferson City on May 20. Our West Central Region, which runs from North Dakota through Oklahoma, including also Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas, encompasses a large fraction of CRP lands and stands to benefit from the wildlife habitat that has been created. It is our best opportunity to halt the downward trends in the populations of our grassland birds and waterfowl.

Senator Kit Bond is a key member of the Senate's Appropriations Committee. He is a farmer and interested in the Farm Bill. Representative Harold Volkmer sits on the House Agriculture Committee, which is responsible for the 1995 Farm Bill.

Are you reading this newsletter but STILL not a member of the National Audubon Society?



When you join the National Audubon Society, you become an important part of the most effective environmental organization in the world. An organization for nature and wildlife that reflects your concerns and rewards you with an impressive range of benefits.

AUDUBON magazine. Enjoy a year, six bimonthly issues, of our award-winning publication. Experience the photography and articles that transport you to the natural wonders of the world.

Free membership in your local Audubon chapter. Audubon members across the country have formed more than 500 local chapters, through which they are a voice for conservation in their communities. Chapters offer the opportunity to get active at the local level through conservation

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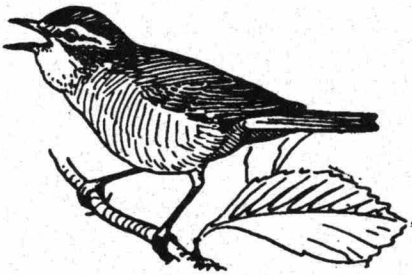
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AUDUBON ADVENTURES



The Education Corner

Birding Successes

Were you out birding on Birding Big Day or during the North American Bird Migration Count? If you were, you might want to compare numbers with Audubon member Paul Bauer. Paul states, "I felt like a kid again on Big Day. I couldn't endure this pace more than a few times a year!"

On May 6, Paul logged his best personal Big Day in the St. Louis area in 48 years of birding by sighting 147 bird species. His group, including Anne McCormack, Kevin Renick, Niels Rattenborg, and Greg Voigt, recorded an impressive total of 153 species as they traveled to places like Busch Wildlife Area, Castlewood State Park, and Riverlands. According to Paul, the best bird of the day was the black-necked stilt, seen at Marais Temps Clair.

For the North American Migration Count on May 13, Paul and his companions Kraig Paradise, Kevin Renick, and Mike Treffert spotted 132 bird species, the best total in the 3-year history of the count. This total, logged just in St. Charles County, included 24 species of warblers and 6 species of vireos.

Eagle-Viewing Platform Dedicated to Mary Chambers Wiese

Over the last winter, an eagle observation platform was named posthumously after Mary Chambers Wiese, a nationally known bird watcher, conservationist, and long-time St. Louis Audubon member.

The platform is located on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property at the south end of Lock and Dam 25, 3 miles east of Winfield along the Mississippi River, about 40 miles north of St. Louis. The Nature Conservancy staff and volunteers,

with materials donated by Union Electric and the Corps of Engineers, built the platform at a cost of \$30,000. Consisting of 2 levels covering almost 350 square feet, the viewing platform is one of the largest and highest in Missouri for eagle watching.

The platform provides clear views toward the 28-acre Sandy Island Eagle Sanctuary just south of Lock and Dam 25. The sanctuary is owned and operated by the Nature Conservancy and is an area where bald eagles roost.

Bill Wiese spoke at the platform dedication in December, describing his wife Mary as "a perennial student and teacher. She frequently encouraged and stimulated others to learn and enjoy the natural world." Mary's world bird count was over 4,500 species, which placed as the fourth highest life list, according to the National Audubon Society.

The dedication plaque in memory of Mary states, "She taught us to look up."

(Some information taken from the *Citizen Journal*, December 14, 1994.)

Missouri Legislature Fails to Pass Parks and Soils Conservation Bill

by Jim Holsen

Few environmental issues were before the Missouri legislature in the spring session just ended. Perhaps the most important issue was the necessity to renew the 1/10th of one percent Parks and Soils Conservation Sales Tax that supports our state parks and soils conservation program. The legislature needed to pass a bill authorizing the Governor to put the issue on the ballot in the fall of 1996.

Several bills were introduced early in the session. One of the more controversial bills would have merged the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Parks into the Department of Conservation and, at the same time, slightly

Efforts Underway to Save the Arena Site for Forest Park

by Jim Holsen

In May, representatives of Citizens to Protect Forest Park met with representatives of the Art Museum to discuss the Arena site and its relationship to the new development plan for Forest Park. All of the major institutions within the park have expansion plans, and it is difficult to see how they can be accommodated under the policy of no net loss of open space.

While no agreement was reached on the role of the Arena in the new plans, all did agree that the site should be saved for Forest Park. By now representatives of all major institutions and other groups interested in the park have signed an Agreement of Understanding, a consensus that the site is essential to the future of the park.

But there is still no agreement on how the site should be used. And some resolution of that question is urgently needed. The deadline for the City's request for development proposals is June 30. Unless the institutions and other interested groups can commit themselves to a common course of action before then, the site may be lost to development.

Pat Waterston, head of Citizens to Protect Forest Park, has led the way in negotiations. As a member of this group, St. Louis Audubon has been participating in the discussions.

reduced funding for the parks. Other proposals would have divided the present tax revenue into 4 parts, using some for urban parks and storm water control and leaving less for the state parks. Still another proposal would have doubled the sales tax in order to provide funds for urban parks and storm water control.

As the legislature headed into the final week of the session, it looked like a straightforward reauthorization of the tax would be approved. But time ran out after much debate on abortion counseling and other issues. In the end no action was taken on this important matter.

It appears now that citizens' committees will place an initiative on the ballot. That was always considered to be a possibility if the legislature refused to take a responsible stance on the issue. The tax does not expire until 1998, but action must be taken well before that time to insure continued funds for our state parks.

Officers 1995-96

Mary Lou Miller	President	389-3969
Dianne Johnson	VP-Education	458-4369
Jim Holsen	VP-Conservation	822-0410
James Jennings	VP-Finance	532-1725
Betsy Warren	Treasurer	892-1302
Mary Dueren	Secretary	576-1473

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Sue Smith	Programs	256-7986
Dave Tylka	Audio/Visual Library	984-7712
Julie Wells	Awards & Scholarships	962-2093
Terry Whaley		938-5386

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Katherine Chambers	Membership	863-9346
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LaVerne Koyne	Message Center Phone Line	878-9125
Janice Patton	Print Library	921-4875

Our Phone Number

To contact the St. Louis Audubon Society, please call (314) 822-6595.

THANK YOU

For Donations to the St. Louis Audubon Society:

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KARL & VIRGINIA RUNYAN
MARGARETTE STEINER, *both in memory of Ernest A. Hoskins*



Newsletter Information

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Please send any article submissions for the next edition by **August 1, 1995** to Karen Tylka, 3155 Frisco Hill Rd., Imperial, MO 63052 (H# 942-3142).



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